



STATE OF CONNECTICUT ~ COUNCIL ON SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION

24 Ingham Hill Road ~ Essex, Connecticut 06426 ~ 860.767.9594 ~ [ct.cswc@att.net](mailto:ct.cswc@att.net)

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**TESTIMONY OF Jeffrey H. Folger, Chairman**

**SUBMITTED TO Appropriations Committee ~ March 2, 2015**

**Governor's Bill 6824 – Governor's Budget Document**

**\$10 Million USDA Grant Awarded to Council January 2015 Is now at Risk  
Based on Cuts to Council and Districts**

**REQUESTING \$600,000 to Reinstate Full Funding to Council and Districts**

As Chairman of the Council on Soil and Waters Conservation, I respectfully request full funding for the Council and the Connecticut's five (5) Conservation Districts that serve Connecticut. Mandated under CGS 22a-315, these two organizations have played an integral role for close to 80 years protecting our soil and water resources and ensuring that CT residents have access to clean water and a healthy and safe local food supply.

- In 2014, the Council, with full support from its members, including DEEP, DoAg and UCONN Extension, applied for a \$20 million dollar award (from USDA Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) for LI Sound watershed aimed at improving water quality in the Sound.)
- In January 2015 the Council was awarded an historic \$10 Million award, the largest ever made for the Long Island Sound.

**➤ ELIMINATION OF STATE FUNDS TO COUNCIL AND CONSERVATION DISTRICTS PUTS \$10 MILLION USDA GRANT IN JEOPARDY**

Without State funding, the Council and Districts will not have matching dollars in place to coordinate and implement the grant and risk not only losing the \$10 million in USDA funds, but the matching funds that have been pledged by other organizations including the DEEP, DoAG, UCONN Extension, Nature Conservancy, Highstead, and the CT River Watershed Council.

Additionally, not being able to execute this major grant, would jeopardize future funding efforts.

If you have any questions, please contact me at (860) 916-0589. Thank you!